

REMARKS

Election/Restriction

The Examiner has re-grouped the claims into three species. The Applicant maintains traversal of the exclusion of claim 7.

Drawings

The drawings have been amended to designate Figures 1 and 2 as “Prior Art”. No new subject matter has been added to the drawings. The Applicant respectfully request that the changes be accepted by the Examiner and that the set of drawings, as amended, be accepted by the Examiner.

Amendments to the Claims

The application presently contains claims 1-6 and 8-13 with claim 7 withdrawn from consideration. With this response, the Applicant amends claims 1, 5, 7, 8, and 11; cancels claims 2-4, and 6; and adds new claim 15. Support for the amendments can be found in the application as originally filed. For example, support for the amendment to claims 1, 5, 7, 8, and 11 can be found in page 6, lines 3-5, lines 19-25, and lines 17-22. For example, support for new claim 15 can be found in page 6, line 26, to page 7, line 1, and Figure 4, figure number 14. A comma is added in claim 1 to clarify that “*mounted on a gas turbine shaft*” is not a required limitation for “*a combustion chamber*” in the claim. All amendments are made without prejudice.

Claim Rejections – 35 USC § 112

The Examiner rejects claims 1-6 and 8-14 as being indefinite due to features of claims 1, 6, 11, 12, and 13 lacking proper antecedent basis. The Applicant amends claim 1 to provide an antecedent basis for “*said at least one steam turbine*” in the dependent claims by specifying “*at least one steam turbine*” in independent claim 1. The Applicant amends claims 2, 5, and 11 to use the antecedent basis correctly. The Applicant amends claim 1 to include a “*further gas compressor*”, which gives proper antecedent basis for “*one or more of said gas compressors*” in claims 12 and 13. The Applicant respectfully requests that the indefiniteness rejection be withdrawn.

Claim Rejections – 35 USC § 103

The Examiner rejects claim 1 as being unpatentable over Frutsci (U.S. 6,223,523) in view of either the common knowledge of the art or over Lardi et al. (U.S. 3,948,054) and optionally in view of Rice (U.S. 4,896,499). The amended claim 1 includes the features “*a gas compressor mounted on a compressor steam turbine shaft*”, “*at least one steam turbine mounted on the compressor steam turbine shaft*”, and “*a gas turbine mounted on a gas turbine shaft*.” This places the gas compressor and the steam turbine on a common shaft and the gas turbine on a different shaft. The Examiner states that Frutsci teaches “a gas compressor (1) mounted on a compressor shaft (47)” and “a gas turbine (3) mounted on a gas turbine shaft (47).” This indicates that the system in Frutsci has the gas compressor (1) on the same shaft (47) as the gas turbine (3), a configuration which is counter-indicated by the claim language as shown above.

Further, the Examiner has not shown in the art cited where the steam turbine drives at least one further gas compressor, which is connected in series with the first gas compressor, as per the presently amended claims.

In the present invention, the gas turbine and the load are mounted on a separate gas turbine shaft (indicated with reference numeral 5 in the drawings of the present invention). This means that only the steam turbine drives the gas compressor during operation, but does not drive the gas turbine and the load.

A similar difference exists between the present invention and Rice. In Rice (the following reference numerals refer to Figure 1 of Rice) the gas compressor (24) is mounted on the same compressor shaft (48) as the gas turbine (46-28). A further difference is that, unlike the disclosure of the present application, the steam turbine of Rice (55) is driving a load. Another major difference is that, also unlike the present invention, the steam turbine (55) is not driving the gas compressor via a common shaft.

According to the disclosure of the present application, the gas compressor and the gas turbine (with the load) are mounted on different shafts: the steam turbine drives the gas compressor via

a common shaft and the steam turbine drives at least one further gas compressor, which is connected in series with the first gas compressor.

In view of the above, the Applicant respectfully requests that the obviousness rejection be withdrawn.

The Examiner also rejects claim 1 as being unpatentable over Horner (U.S. 6,003,298) in view of the admitted prior art or Frutschi (U.S. 6,223,523). Claim 1 has been amended to include limitations found in previous claim 4. At least for the reasons previous claim 4 was not rejected based on the prior art of Horner et al., the Applicant respectfully requests that the rejection be withdrawn.

The Examiner also rejects claims 2-6 and 8-13 as being obvious in view of the above-cited art. The Applicant submits that these claims, aside from the cancelled claims, should be allowed at least based on their dependency, either directly or indirectly, on claim 1.

The Commissioner is authorized to charge any additional fees which may be required or credit overpayment to deposit account no. 12-0415. In particular, if this response is not timely filed, then the Commissioner is authorized to treat this response as including a petition to extend the time period pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) requesting an extension of time of the number of months necessary to make this response timely filed and the petition fee due in connection therewith may be charged to deposit account no. 12-0415.

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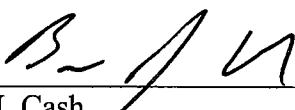
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Enclosures: Replacement Sheets (Sheet 1/9, Sheet 2/9)